



Stonehouse Lake Fisheries Management Report 2004



Stonehouse Lake is a 41-acre impoundment located in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Amherst County. This is one of three public reservoirs owned by the County and offers good fishing opportunities. The various facilities include picnic tables with shelters, grills, restroom, and play area. This lake has a good boat ramp for boat anglers but has limited bank fishing access. The lake is open year round but nighttime activities are prohibited except for fishing. Anglers are required to obtain a permit from the county to fish at night. Boats propelled by oar or electric motor are welcome but outboard motor use is prohibited.

This reservoir was first opened to fishing in 1981 and largemouth bass were protected with a 14-inch minimum size limit. The size limit was removed in 1983 to reduce the numbers of abundant slow growing bass. A 12-15 inch protective slot limit was initiated in 1990 to protect some of the larger bass while allowing harvest of some small and large fish.

Sampling conducted in 1988 and 1991 indicated the bass population had never reached it's potential. Sampling in the spring of 2000 and 2003 revealed that the largemouth bass population improved by producing larger bass than in previous years. The current 12-15 inch slot limit is protecting bass that make it to the slot limit and is allowing a few bass to grow large enough to qualify (minimum of 22" or 8 lbs.) for the Virginia Angler Recognition Program.

The panfish population is dominated by bluegill and black crappie. The bluegill population has maintained good numbers of quality-size bluegill. Redear sunfish are present but they are not abundant enough to offer many additional fishing opportunities. The Crappie population has remained stable for several years but reproduction in recent years has been poor. High harvest rates of crappie combined with poor reproduction will result in a reduction of the adult crappie population during the next several years.

Channel catfish have been stocked since 1978 but no catfish were collected in 2000 or 2003 and only one catfish was collected in 1991. The channel catfish stocking program at Stonehouse Lake was discontinued since stocked catfish contributed very little to the fishery.

The current regulations have been effective in producing a well-balanced fish population and should remain in affect. If harvest trends at Stonehouse Lake change, this regulation may need to be modified to meet changing angler interests.

To access this reservoir, turn northeast on Rt. 610 from Rt. 60 (approximately 9 miles west of Amherst), then turn left on Rt. 625, and the lake access road will be the first road on the left. Permits for night fishing are available through Amherst County at 434-946-9371.

Stonehouse Lake Key Findings - 2003

- The 2003 electrofishing survey indicated that Thrasher lake fish populations are balanced.
- Good numbers of largemouth bass were collected in and above the 12-15 inch slot limit. PSD and RSD indices were similar to 2000. Recruitment has also remained stable since 2000.
- The black crappie CPUE remained stable and PSD indices improved slightly since 2000. However, unstable recruitment will likely cause future fluctuations in the crappie population.
- Catch rates for bluegill were very high (496 per hr.) nearly doubling the 2000 catch rates. However, PSD indices increased since 2000 and were similar to 1991.
- The current regulations at Stonehouse Lake are working well and are helping to maintain a balanced fishery for all 3 major species.
- Channel catfish stocking was discontinued after 2000 due to poor contribution of channel catfish to the fishery.

Management Recommendations

- Continue monitoring the bass population every 3 years to determine if the reservoir maintains a quality largemouth bass fishery.

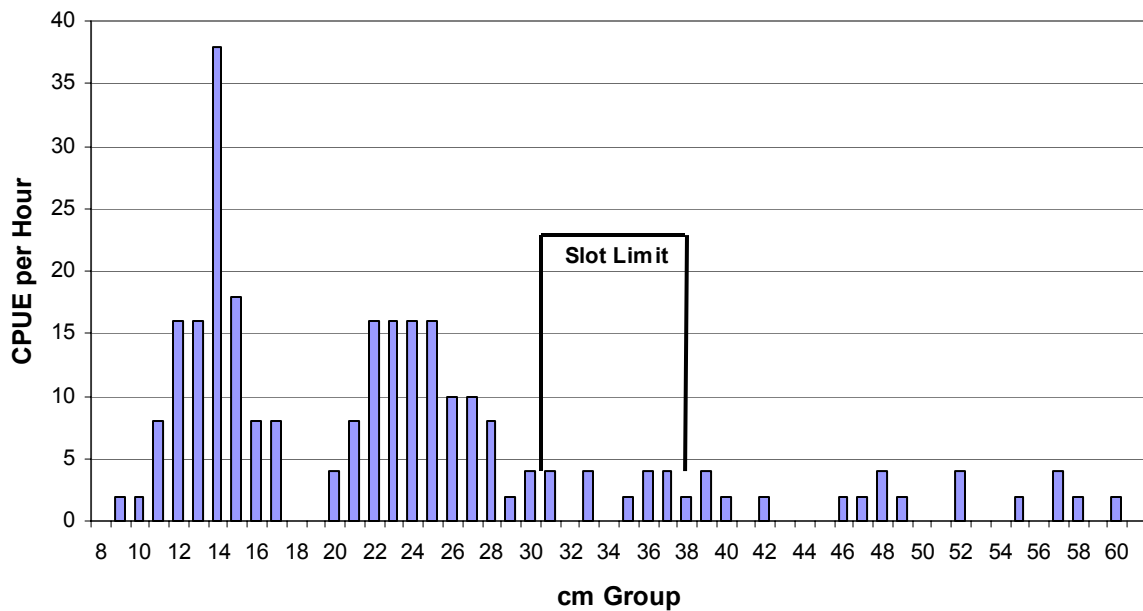


Figure 1. Length frequency distribution for largemouth bass collected with electrofishing gear from Stonehouse Lake on 4-28-2003.

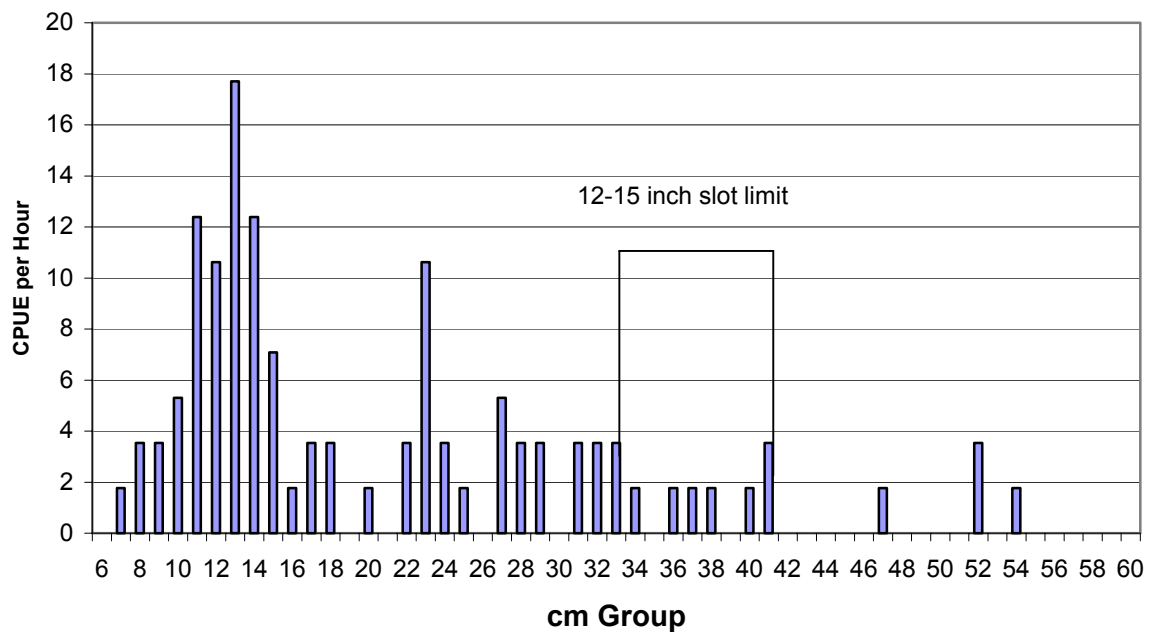


Figure 2. Length frequency distribution for largemouth bass collected with electrofishing gear from Stonehouse Lake on 4-24-2000.

Table 1. Electrofishing CPUE (hr) data and proportional and relative stock indices collected from Stonehouse Lake from 1991 - 2003.

Species	Year	N	CPUE	Young	Stock	Quality	Preferred	PSD	RSD
LMB				(0-19)	(20-29)	(30-37)	(>37)		
	2003	139	278	58	53	11	17	35	21
	2000	83	147	47	19	9	8	47	22
	1991	174	143	88	80	2	4	7	5
BLC				(0-12)	(13-19)	(20-24)	(>24)		
	2003	53	106	3	9	30	11	82	22
	2000	65	115	5	16	42	2	73	3
	1991	67	55	48	13	5	1	32	5
BLG				(0-7)	(8-14)	(15-19)	(>19)		
	2003	124	496	9	69	45	1	40	1
	2000	95	285	24	62	9	0	13	0
	1991	145	280	49	53	43	0	45	0